

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Update on Core Content for Assessment

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 158.6451, KRS 158.6453, KRS 158.645

History/Background:

At the direction of the Kentucky Board of Education, the Kentucky Department of Education has clarified, focused and refined the *Core Content for Assessment* in preparation for the release of the Request for Proposals for the design and implementation of the next phase of the assessment and accountability program. Kentucky's *Core Content for Assessment, Version 4.0* will be the content on which students are assessed beginning in 2007. Throughout the process of refining the *Core Content for Assessment*, KDE staff involved teachers, administrators, parents, higher education, the National Technical Advisory Panel for Assessment and Accountability, the School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council, national experts and various advisory groups.

Progress Since the April 2005 KBE Meeting:

Content Advisory Committees (CAC). In June, Kentucky teachers representing all grade levels and content areas met to develop items for pre-testing for the 2007 Kentucky Core Content Test. This provided an opportunity for the Content Advisory Committees to use the refined version of the *Core Content for Assessment* in actual item development. CAC members for each content area were asked to identify any remaining issues related to clarity of the standards and implications for item development and to make recommendations to KDE for additional refinements to the *Core Content for Assessment*.

CAC members were positive about the addition of the depth of knowledge to the *Core Content for Assessment* and expressed that they would like additional explanations and examples in the instructional version for teachers. They provided some specific edits to improve the clarity of the language of the some of the content statements and identified statements that were not clear enough for item development. Staff has incorporated the feedback from CAC into the version of the *Core Content for Assessment* that will be released with the Request for Proposals.

Mathematics Standards Reviewed by Achieve, Inc.

Since the mathematics standards have received additional attention due to the on-going discussions about alignment between the P-12 and postsecondary/workplace expectations, the

Kentucky Department of Education requested Achieve, Inc. to conduct an alignment analysis comparing several of Kentucky's standards documents for mathematics with Achieve's American Diploma (ADP) Benchmarks. The scope of the review included the Program of Studies for Middle Level and High School Mathematics, the draft refined 4.0 version of the Core Content for Assessment for Middle Level and High School Mathematics, the Kentucky Statewide College-Readiness Standards in Mathematics, and Achieve's American Diploma Project Mathematics Benchmarks. The Department of Education received the June 2005 draft report, *Achieve's Standards Alignment Analysis for Kentucky* (Appendix B) and an executive summary (Appendix A), both of which are attached. This report was presented for discussion at the June 15, 2005, meeting of the state P-16 Council.

The Achieve review included the following findings and recommendations in regard to the *Core Content for Assessment*:

- Achieve recognized the intent of the *Core Content for Assessment* is to define content that is essential for all students to know and that is eligible for inclusion on the state assessment administered in high school at grade 11.
- The *Core Content for Assessment* in its refined 2005 version is more comprehensive, more appropriately rigorous, and better aligned with both the KY College Readiness Standards and the ADP Benchmarks than is the *Program of Studies*, which has not been reviewed or refined since 1998.

Achieve's analysis provides specific recommendations to reconcile several discrepancies between the 2005 version of the *Core Content for Assessment* and the *Program of Studies*. Noting that the *Program of Studies* and the refined *Core Content for Assessment* were developed at different points in time, Achieve's review specified that the differences in the two documents present varying points of view related to expectations for high school students that contribute to the lack of coherence among documents and could be confusing to schools and districts and the broader community. In the attached reports (Appendix A and B) specific alignment issues are identified. KDE will have the opportunity to consider how to resolve these differences based on the direction from the Kentucky Board of Education as to revising the *Program of Studies* (to be discussed under a separate agenda item at the August 2005 KBE meeting). Achieve's report also provided recommendations on instructional tools (i.e., specific assessment tasks/examples to communicate the intent and rigor of the expectations) that would assist teachers in classroom instruction and development of a single document that includes mathematics standards as well as the parameters for assessment. The work is currently underway as part of the instructional version of the *Core Content for Assessment*. One of the tasks of the Mathematics Summit was to identify example tasks and problems that illustrate each of the standards statements.

English/Language Arts Standards Reviewed by Achieve, Inc.

The Kentucky Department of Education has asked Achieve to provide a similar analysis of the state's English/language arts standards documents. This analysis is underway, and will be shared at the September 2005 P-16 Council meeting and the October 2005 KBE meeting. The work to date of the American Diploma Project has focused solely on mathematics and English/language

arts, so similar analysis in other content areas is not available. There are no ADP Benchmarks for the other content areas.

Next Steps:

KDE staff and other stakeholders are in the process of developing a plan to disseminate the refined *Core Content for Assessment* through various means of communication and professional development strategies. In September 2005, staff are scheduled to provide professional development to the Instructional Support Network and to higher education deans and faculty. Staff will provide updates to the KBE as requested on the instructional version, the dissemination plan and professional development.

Policy Issue(s):

- Does the Kentucky Board of Education have issues/concerns about the recommendations provided by Achieve?
- What further guidance relative to the *Core Content for Assessment* does the Kentucky Board of Education have?

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

Keeping instruction focused on both the breadth and depth of content and student performance defined by the Kentucky Board of Education is essential in moving toward proficiency by 2014.

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